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BOTTLE CONTAINMENT AND IDENTIFIER UNIT

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BOTTLE CONTAINMENT AND IDENTIFIER UNIT

DESCRIPTION

5 TECHNICAL FIELD:

The present invention relates to a bottle holder and/or container; more particularly, a baby bottle containment unit incorporating bottler identifiers thereby preventing user confusion and the spread of germs.

10 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION:

Beverage containers and bottle holders are known in the art. Traditionally, beverage containers, such as paper or plastic cups, mugs, bottles and the like have a base specifically designed for use in a holder. Here, the holder is a relatively small device capable of holding a variety of beverage containers (as well as standard twelve ounce cans) and are commonly adapted for use in an automotive vehicle.

An example of a traditional beverage container is depicted in U.S. Patent Nos. 5,071,002 and 5,975,342. The '002 patent discloses a multi-sided holder having a hollow receptacle with a plurality of pairs of flat sides. Each side incorporates holes extending through the side walls. As for the '342 patent, it discloses a container holder having a rectangular bottom and sidewalls. The interior of the sidewalls include a circular top opening in the holder to accommodate beverage containers to be placed therein. However, the '002 and '342 patents fail to incorporate bottle identifiers as well as devices used during transportation such as handles and/or straps.

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However, most of these holding devices did not adapt to the baby bottle; and as a result, a different industry emerged. However, the evolved baby bottle holders were either mounted directly onto or were located in close proximity to a crib, carrier, stroller and/or car seat. These types of holders were often used to hold a nursing bottle while feeding an infant. Examples of such baby bottle holders are in U.S. Patent Nos. 4,953,816; 5,092,549; 5,135,189; and 5,192,041. Nevertheless, these bottle holders were not portable and did not provide the benefit of carrying other items besides the bottle itself.

As a result, different designs of the baby bottle holder developed. An example of such a design is depicted in U.S. Patent No. 5,765,704 issued to Cameron in 1998. Here, the baby bottle holder included an insulated base member provided with an insert member being equipped with a vertical support component and a horizontal support component. Specifically, the baby bottle holder is used with a baby bottle having a collapsible liner suspended with an open ended liner support member.

Another example is shown in U.S. Patent No. 5,183,229 issued to Duggan in 1993. The '229 patent provides for a baby bottle holder comprising a shell housing a bottle therein and configured to remain stationary. However, these abovementioned baby bottle holders do not provide for holding multiple bottles, especially for a person who cares for multiple children simultaneously.

U.S. Patent Nos. 5,039,046 and 5,711,500 tried to provide devices for multiple bottles. Specifically, the '046 patent discloses a rack comprising a hanging mechanism and a plurality of vertical and horizontal wire-formed members designed to retain baby bottles. Likewise, the '500 patent provides for a flat-face holding device having a plurality of bottle adjustment retaining

holes. However, these holders do not provide a user with any means of bottle identifications; and as such, these holders promote cross-contamination in the event the bottles are confused from one baby to another.

In view of the above described deficiencies associated with bottle holders, the present invention has been developed to alleviate these drawbacks and provide further benefits to a user. These enhancements and benefits are described in greater detail herein below with respect to alternative embodiments of the present invention.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION:

Described herein is a bottle containment and identifier unit comprising a container being adjoined to a removable lid. Specifically, the container has a cavity capable of storing items therein and a peripheral lip. At least one handle may be attached to the container capable of receiving an end of a strap allowing the unit to be easily manipulated and mobile. A lid is sealably coupled to the peripheral lip and has at least one aperture bored through the lid. The aperture(s) maintains each bottle in an upright position and is preferably sized to have a diameter snugly fit around the circumference of a bottle thereby preventing a bottle(s) from slipping out of the aperture(s). The container and/or lid may be made of clear material, namely plastic, allowing a user to view items contained inside thereby promoting efficiency and preventing useless searching. Further, the plastic material is reusable and dishwasher-safe thereby allowing the bottle containment and identifier unit to be cleaned without being damaged.

At least one bottle identifier is attached to either the lid or container and is preferably positioned adjacent to an aperture. These identifiers are utilized to prevent user confusion by

labeling bottle apertures for its corresponding bottle and further prevent cross-contamination of germs. Clear material may be placed over bottle identifier(s) to prevent separation of the identifier(s) from the lid or container. In an alternative embodiment, the bottle identifier may be a Velcro™ couplet allowing a user to change labels as desired.

5 Therefore, another advantage of the present invention is to provide a bottle containment and identifier unit capable of serving two functions: (1) holding bottles in secure apertures; and (2) providing a storage bin in the cavity of the container. The present invention is designed to help a user of multiple children recognize and retrieve the correct bottle. The depth of the cavity is capable of holding a variety of items customized to fit a user's needs.

10 The present invention further provides for a containment and identifier unit capable of being compact in size, thus requiring less space for utilization of the apparatus. Another advantage of the present invention is to introduce a bottle containment unit being easy and inexpensive to produce and/or manufacture due to its simple structure.

15 The beneficial effects described above apply generally to the exemplary structure disclosed herein. The specific structure and alternative embodiments utilizing these benefits will be described in detail herein below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS:

20 The invention will now be described in greater detail in the following way of example only and with reference to the attached drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective side view of a bottle containment and identifier unit;

Figure 2 is a plan view of a lid of the present invention;

Figure 3 is a perspective side view of an alternative embodiment of the present invention; and

Figure 4 is a perspective side view of the present invention having a handle attached to the bottle containment unit capable of receiving a strap utilized during transport of the unit.

5 **MODES FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION:**

As required, detailed embodiments of the present invention are disclosed herein; however, it is to be understood that the disclosed embodiments are merely exemplary of the invention that may be embodied in various and alternative forms. The figures are not necessarily to scale, some features may be exaggerated or minimized to show details of particular components. Therefore, specific structural and functional details disclosed herein are not to be interpreted as limiting, but merely as a basis for the claims and as a representative basis for teaching one skilled in the art to variously employ the present invention.

Furthermore, elements may be recited as being “coupled”; this terminology’s use contemplates elements being connected together in such a way that there may be other components interstitially located between the specified elements, and that the elements so specified may be connected in fixed or movable relation one to the other. The term “coupled” should be contrasted with the use of the terminology “direct” connection which designates a relationship or joinder that does not have other components interstitially located therebetween, but the components may be fixed or movable with respect to one another.

Figure 1 illustrates a perspective view of a bottle containment and identifier unit 7. The bottle containment unit 7 includes a container 10 having a cavity 15 and a peripheral lip 12. Preferably, the cavity 15 is configured to incorporate a depth capable of storing items therein; such items can include,

but is not limited to, a pacifier, a diaper, wash cloths, hand wipes, tissues, bibs, clothing items and the like. In a preferred embodiment, the container 10 is made of clear material, namely plastic, allowing a user to view items contained therein.

Figures 1 and 2 show a lid 14 being removably coupled to the peripheral lip 12 and has at least one aperture 16 bored through the lid 14. The lid 14 is preferably made of clear plastic thereby providing the user viewing capabilities of the contents held therein. In a preferred embodiment, each aperture 16 is symmetrically and centrally located on the lid 14. Further, each aperture 16 is desirably sized to have a diameter fitted to a circumference of a bottle thereby preventing the bottle from slipping out of the aperture 16.

At least one bottle identifier 21 is attached to the lid 14; or alternatively, may be attached to the container 10 itself as shown in Figures 2 and 3. Each bottle identifier 21 is desirably positioned adjacent to a corresponding aperture 16. Clear material may be applied over each bottle identifier 21 in order to secure the identifier 21 in place and prevent departure from the lid 14 or container 10. In an alternative embodiment, the bottle identifier 21 may be a Velcro™ couplet where a first portion of the couplet is attached to either the lid 14 or container 10 and the second portion is connected to the first portion. An exterior side of the second portion may have a label either stitched or written thereon. In the event the user desires to change the labeling, the second portion is capable of being peeled off and interchanged with a substitute.

Figure 4 depicts at least one handle 24 being attached to an exterior portion of the container 10 in order to provide easy handling during transport. Preferably, multiple handles are strategically positioned on opposing walls of the container 10 and capable of receiving an end of a strap 30. Each end of the strap 30 is interlockingly engaged to each handle 24 thereby providing a purse-like style

of transportation for the user.

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

The present invention finds specific industrial applicability in the beverage and/or infant and
5 baby product industries.